

## Abstract 509

**TITLE:** Associations Among Domestic Violence, Alcohol Use, and Condom Use  
in Heterosexual Couples at Risk for HIV Infection

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**ISSUE:** Many HIV/AIDS intervention studies are now focusing on the power dynamics of relationships between men and women; however, most are still relying on reports from one partner. Understanding domestic violence dynamics as perceived by each partner in a couple, rather than one partner, can identify barriers to the adoption of safer-sex behaviors. To address this issue, information regarding domestic violence and HIV risk behaviors was collected from both partners of couples participating in an HIV/AIDS preventive intervention study.

**SETTING:** Heterosexual couples between the ages of 18 and 45 were recruited from community agency sites in South Florida. For a couple to be eligible for participation, one partner had to be at risk for HIV/STDs because of his or her sexual or drug use behavior and had to describe him- or herself as African American, Hispanic, or non-Hispanic white.

**PROJECT:** This data is from the pilot study of a cognitive-behavioral preventive intervention for couples, consisting of four 2-hour sessions of facilitated discussions and instructions about sexual behaviors and protection against STDs and HIV. Participants were randomly assigned to complete instruments and attend the 4-week intervention (treatment group) or complete instruments only (control group). Thus far, over 100 couples from South Florida have completed the pretest phase of the study.

**RESULTS:** Prevalence rates of domestic violence among this sample were substantially higher than prevalence rates generally found in domestic violence studies. Couples who drank alcohol had significantly higher odds of reporting domestic violence. General alcohol intake was significantly associated with reports of either partner being high from alcohol just before having sex. Male partners' reports of alcohol intake just before sex was significantly associated with the non-use of condoms. An indirect association between domestic violence and condom use is suspected based on these findings.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The association among domestic violence, alcohol, and condom use suggests that domestic violence plays a role in safer-sex behaviors. The findings support the importance of collecting reports from both partners regarding their HIV risk behaviors and domestic violence in their relationship.

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